

**New Park and Library for University City
Council President Scott Peters, First District
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After five years of planning, design and construction, the North University Library and Nobel Park are about to open. This is one of the most comprehensive and exciting projects I've worked on during my time as a Councilmember.

In 2002, my staff and I began working with the community to design a mixed-use site, providing a balance of active and passive recreation in close proximity to a world-class community library. We recognized that these two facilities need and deserve their own space. At the same time, a joint site allows us to maximize open space and provides an anchor for that area of North University City.

Construction on the \$17 million project began in September 2004, and is funded by Facilities Benefit Assessments, money generated by new construction for public amenities such as these. We'll celebrate the grand opening of this exciting project on September 19 at 2:00 p.m.

The triangle-shaped Nobel Park, fronted by Judicial, Nobel and Shoreline Drives, is flanked by two large multi-purpose fields for league and pick-up play. The design features active and passive recreation throughout, including a passive park, dog park, basketball court, picnic and seating areas and children's playground.

The 10,000 square foot recreation center features multipurpose courts and meeting rooms, as well as exterior courtyard seating. The bay ceiling of the main gym allows filtered daytime lighting, an environmental and aesthetic plus. The materials and color scheme for the rec building was designed with community input, to harmonize with the rest of the park and surrounding community.

The 16,088 square foot North University Library sits at the heart of the site, adjacent to the recreation building and two shared parking lots. Like the recreation building, the library maximizes the use of natural light throughout. Children will enjoy visiting the secure indoor and outdoor reading areas and computer lab. Community groups can take advantage of meeting and seminar rooms.

Like many new public projects in San Diego, the park and library site features a public art component. Two artworks were created by Southern California artist Blue McRight, whose public art can be seen in public buildings around the country.

Her art installations reflect the mind and body, each represented by the library and recreation center. *Sprout* is a stainless steel light sculpture located in the library courtyard. It features two steel forms reminiscent of seeds or pods, illuminated from within. At night, light shines from within the pods through cut out letters: T, A, C, and G, the letters representing the building blocks of DNA. *Twist* features a series of

flat brass markers in a double helix pattern set into the concrete paving building on the themes of biology and technology.

Both projects were designed to meet the Silver LEED rating, which rates sustainable and green design. The roof of the library and rec center use highly reflective surfaces, to keep the roof cool and reduce the need for air conditioning. Photovoltaic cells atop the roofs generate green power to help run the facilities. The 700 trees and 10,000 plants on the site were selected for their drought-resistance, reducing the need for excessive irrigation. I'm pleased to see the City incorporate sustainable design elements into public projects such as these.

This project would not be complete without the help and guidance of the entire University City community. Special recognition goes to the University City Planning Group, the City's Library and Park and Recreation Departments, and Stan Siegel of the Friends of the North University Community Branch Library.

The Friends of the San Diego Public Library wishes to expand the University City North Library Branch Chapter. Please contact Stan Siegel at stnsiegel@aol.com if you are interested in participating in this Chapter.

I hope to see you at our grand opening event, Wednesday, September 19 at 2:00 p.m. Parking is available in two lots on either side of the library and recreation center complex.